UNDP

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Distributed on request
DP/PROJECTS/7390

ENGLISH

DEPT.

APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF URUGUAY

IPF:(1992-96) $4 728 000

(URU/92/G31) - Conservation of Biodiversity in the Eastern Wetlands

Date of approval by the AC:[1/]	18 November 1992
Expected duration:	Three years
Proposed executing agency:	Government
Government implementing agency:	Steering Committee composed of Ministry of Housing, Territorial Regulation, and the Environment,Municipality of Rocha, and the University of the Republic
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$2 900 000 Source of funds: GEF
Total UNDP budget:	$2 900 000

Project background

Wetlands are critical sites for the protection of bioadversity, serving as breeding grounds for often thousands of fish, crustacean, and bird species, as critical stop-over sites for migratory shore birds, and as refuges for species in danger of extinction. However, wetlands are being destroyed at a rapid rate around the world as they are drained for agriculture, converted to lowland rice production or filled in for construction. The Eastern Wetlands of Uruguay form part of the richest wetlands complex in subtropical South America and embody the greatest ecosystem diversity in the country, marked by dunes, coastal lagoons, rocky hills, and seasonally submerged flatlands. 147 bird species have been identified; 80 percent of all Uruguay's waterfowl are found here; and the unique Butia palm association covers 70,000 hectares. Coastal lagoons provide the spawning and rearing habitat for commercially important fish and crustaceans, particularly shrimp. The Wetlands, a mosaic of both public and private holdings, with the latter type predominating, were designated a MAB Biosphere Reserve in 1976 and a RAMSAR site in 1984 (for their importance to migratory waterfowl); and several species fall under the CITES treaty on trade in endangered species.

The predominant economic activity has been cattle ranching, with hunting fishing and crafts production as supplementary activities principally among localized populations of farmworkers in specific areas. More recently, capital-intensive rice production has been growing in importance on the coast, providing a highly seasonal source of employment. In general, formal education and literacy levels (96 percent) are typical of Uruguay as a whole, and agricultural technical cooperation is well-established in the area, although lacking a focus on sustainable agroecosystem management.

Threats to the Wetlands' biodiversity are increasing, principally from five activities; rice production; constant extractive pressure on wildlife and vegetation; heavy, unregulated, seasonal tourism on the beaches, dunes and lagoons along the Atlantic coast; state-sponsored hydraulic works and roads, developed under a previous administration; and

---

[1/] **This Fact Sheet reflects the status of the project/revision at the time it was approved by the Action Committee; modifications to the project/revision may have occurred subsequently.**

/...

livestock grazing, for its effect on species composition. To date, no effective wetlands management and protection plans have been implemented due to the lack of a conceptual and institutional framework which joins scientific and localized knowledge to the organized participation of resource users and institutional authorities. This fact requires the development and implementation of innovative strategies and plans which advance the interests and develop the capabilities of both local institutions and landholders to achieve overall protection and sustainable use of wetlands biodiversity.

Description of project

The long-term objective of the project is to achieve effective biodiversity conservation in the Eastern Wetlands through the development and implementation of a Regional Wetlands Management Programme centered around a water and land use conflict resolution process and the development of local producer and institutional capacities for sustainable ecosystem management aimed at protecting biodiversity and enhancing economic production options. Scientific and participatory research will provide the basis for informed decision-making by resource users and institutions, and for the development of policies regarding resource use. The organization of resource users will ensure local participation as a corporate body on the Programme's Steering Committee.

The immediate objectives of the project are: (a) to strengthen the ongoing process of local participation in the design and execution of the Programme, especially in regard to the development of management plans, resource conflict resolution processes, and sustainable production technologies; (b) increase and disseminate scientific and local knowledge regarding the area's flora, fauna and other natural resources; (c) develop and implement plans for the sustainable management of the area's soil, water and biotic resources; (d) reduce water pollution significantly from sewage and agricultural biocides; (e) strengthen human and institutional capacities for effective ecosystem management; (f) establish a protected area network in the Eastern Wetlands consisting of both public and private landholdings; (g) develop proposals for policies, laws and regulations to ensure biodiversity conservation in the Wetlands and compliance with international conventions and agreements of which Uruguay is or may become a party; and (h) develop strategies and plans to ensure the financial sustainability of the Regional Wetlands Programme upon termination of present project funding.

Inputs

UNDP will provide three international consultants in ecosystem/biodiversity management (two man-months), agroecology (one man-month), water resources management (one man-month); a national director (36 man-months); an administrator (36 man-months); national coordinators for the six main areas; a biologist, educator, geographer, economist, social worker and agronomist (216 man-months); eleven national consultants in zoology, marine biology, botany, pollution control, hydrology, agronomy, agricultural extension (2), economy, social work and communication (396 man-months); GIS operators (72 man-months); a lawyer (15 man-months); a a senior biology researcher (50 man-months); a program analyst (five man-months); social promoters (20 man-months); social educators (20 man-months); technical assistants (312 man-months); designers (24 man-months); focal experts (50 man-months); administrative support; international monitoring and evaluation missions; subcontracts on environmental legislation, studies on the economic and social conditions in specific local zones and technical assistance for small entrepreneurs; group training, study tours and workshops in protected areas management; vehicles for land and water; software and hardware technical equipment for laboratories; data gathering, sound and visual recording and reproduction, communication; and miscellaneous costs.

Financial data

	$
Personnel	1 715 800
Subcontract	132 000
Training	160 000
Equipment	805 300
Miscellaneous	86 900